

## **McKinney-Vento Homeless Program (Policy 6005)**

KTEC High School is committed to providing all enrolled students, including homeless students and unaccompanied youth, with access to a high-quality and rigorous education. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is designed to remove barriers that interfere with a homeless youth's ability to attend and participate in school. At KTEC High School, all homeless children and youth will be served using resources provided to the school.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth have access to the same free, public education at KTEC High School, as other children and youth; and have access to educational and other services they need in order to meet State standards. Homeless students and unaccompanied youth will have access to the programs and activities that are offered to other children attending KTEC High School, including transportation, and educational services for which the children/youths meet eligibility criteria (e.g., special education, Title I programming, programs, and services for English Learners), career and technical education programs, and school nutrition programs. This policy will be implemented in accordance with federal and state laws, and KTEC High School's non-discrimination policy.

KTEC High School policies and procedures will be reviewed annually, or when a change in practice is needed. Reviews will take place in the summer, prior to the fall in-service training. Procedures are meant to provide equitable access to educational programming and do not stigmatize or segregate students based on their housing status.

### **Definition of Homeless Children and Youth**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youths as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition includes children and youths:

- Sharing housing due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or another reason;
- Living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate housing;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in a public or private place not designated for, or normally used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar places; and/or
- Living in one of the above circumstances and who are migratory.

Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) will be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

**Homeless status is determined in cooperation with KTEC High School staff, including the Homeless Liaison, and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), unless unaccompanied.**

### **School Selection**

Placement in a school shall, according to the homeless child or youth's best interest:

- Continue the child or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- In the case of unaccompanied youths, The School Homeless Liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youths.

### **Determining Best Interest**

- In determining a child or youth's best interest, KTEC High School presumes that keeping the homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child or youth's parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
- When determining a child or youth's best interest, KTEC High School will consider student-centered factors, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youths, giving priority to the request of the child or youth's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth.
- The school placement of siblings will also be considered when making the best interest determination.
- If KTEC High School determines that it is not in the child or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or KTEC High School as requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth after conducting the best interest determination and considering student-centered factors, KTEC High School will provide the child or youth's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a timely, written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth including information regarding the right to appeal.

### **Enrollment**

A student who is deemed homeless will receive immediate enrollment, even if the family or youth is unable to produce records normally required for school enrollment, such as academic records, immunization/health records, proof of residency, birth certificates, etc.

The student will also be immediately enrolled if they missed the application window or enrollment deadline during a period of homelessness, or has outstanding fees and/or fines. KTEC High School will contact the district the student last attended to obtain pertinent academic or other records. Once the student is enrolled, the homeless liaison will assist the family/youth in obtaining pertinent health records, if needed.

KTEC will ensure that students who are experiencing homelessness are attending school and participating in school activities. Procedures ensure that students do not face barriers to accessing academic or extracurricular activities.

Information regarding enrollment, waiver of school fees, free school lunch, transportation, etc. will be shared with the parent. The liaison, or their designee, will work with the family to

determine necessary services that will be implemented for the student and to provide the family with additional resources.

### **Parent and Student Rights**

Including immediate school enrollment, as described above, upon identification, students who are identified as homeless by KTEC High School's homeless liaison will also be entitled to the following rights:

- School choice: Students may choose to stay at the school of origin (the school attended when permanently housed or the school last attended), or to enroll in the school where currently living for the remainder of the academic year.
- Free lunches: Students are automatically eligible to receive free lunch for the duration of the school year.
- School fee waivers: Students have the right to receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the student's needs. This includes extracurricular activities fees (band, choir, sports, and clubs).
- School supplies: Required school supplies should be provided.
- Transportation: Homeless students are eligible to receive transportation to and from the school of origin for the duration of the school year.

### **Transportation**

KTEC High School will provide transportation for homeless students and unaccompanied minors at the request of the parent, the liaison, or their designee. KTEC has the right to determine the mode of transportation (bussing, gas cards, parental transportation, or a private driver). Information regarding transportation is included in the annual public notices and is also provided to families experiencing homelessness. When a student qualifies as homeless, information about their rights and transportation will be provided to the student and family. If the family requests that information is provided in another language besides English, KTEC High School will make attempts to provide the information in their preferred language or method of communication.

### **Public & Staff Awareness**

The Coordinator of Special Education and Student Support will serve as KTEC's liaison for homeless children and youth. At the beginning of each school year, staff will be given information regarding services for homeless children and youth during in-service training. Trainings will include policies and procedures related to identification and enrollment, school attendance, and academic success. Specific training around the warning signs of homelessness and submitting referrals will also be provided. The required annual notice regarding services for homeless youth, as well as notice of the educational rights of homeless youth, will be provided on the KTEC website and will be disseminated throughout Kenosha County to food banks, shelters, health clinics, job centers, etc.

The Coordinator of Special Education and Student Support and the school counselor will collaborate with community agencies to support the various needs of homeless youth and unaccompanied minors. Collaboration and partnership with local agencies, as well as the Kenosha County Department of Human Services – Children and Family Services Division, will

help meet the needs of homeless youth and their families and provide resources such as food, clothing, shelter, and health services as needed.

### **Dispute Resolutions**

Under McKinney-Vento, parents/guardians who are experiencing homelessness, or unaccompanied youth, have the right to dispute decisions made by KTEC regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment. A written dispute procedures document is kept on file by the homeless liaison and is shared with annual notices, and family packets.

If a dispute arises over enrollment, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will be referred to the Coordinator of Special Education and Student Support for dispute resolutions. During the dispute process, including any and all appeals, the student will be automatically enrolled in KTEC High School, pending the final resolution of the dispute. The student has the right to participate in all academic and extracurricular activities at KTEC while the appeals are pending. Once any dispute-related decisions are made, including appeals to decisions, KTEC will provide the parent/guardian, or unaccompanied youth, with a written explanation of the findings. The explanation will include the reason for the determination and will be in the parent, guardian, or youth's native form of communication.

If a dispute is not resolved after going through KTEC's resolution process, the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied minor may send a request for a resolution to the Superintendent's Office of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

### **Family Resources**

Emergency Services Network - Kenosha County

Kenosha Homeless Assistance Services

Know Your Rights Flyer - Parents

Voluntary Family Transition Questionnaire (Eligibility Survey) - please call the main office for a copy of this form

### **Duties of the School Homeless Liaison**

The School Homeless Liaison or designee shall:

- Ensure that homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Ensure that homeless children and youths are immediately enrolled and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at KTEC High School.
- Ensure that homeless families, children, and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services (such as health, dental, mental health, substance abuse services, and housing services).
- Ensure that the parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful

opportunities to participate in the education of the child/youth. In the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, ensure the youth is informed of these opportunities.

- Provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths and ensure that notice is disseminated in such public places as schools, meal sites, shelters, and other locations frequented by parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied homeless youths, in a manner and form that is understandable to parents, guardians and unaccompanied youths.
- Monitor compliance with all policies and procedures related to the education of homeless children and youths.
- Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Inform parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth, and homeless unaccompanied youths, of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin or the school selected according to the homeless child or youth's best interest.
- Coordinate services between KTEC High School and other homeless family service providers, and coordinate programs for homeless students with other federal and local programs.
- Provide assistance to children and youths who do not have immunizations, health screenings, or immunization or other required health records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or other required medical records.
- Ensure that students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Coordinate with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
- Attend trainings mandated by federal or state law and training or professional development on the definitions of terms related to homelessness specified in sections 103, 401, and 725 of the McKinney-Vento Act which will enable The School Homeless Liaison to affirm, without further agency action by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, that a child or youth who is eligible for and participating in a program provided by KTEC High School, or the child or youth's immediate family, who meets the eligibility requirements for a homeless assistance program or service authorized under Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Act, is eligible for such program or service.
- Ensure that other school personnel receives professional development and other support on McKinney-Vento Act and homeless children and youth.
- Assist the KTEC High School Governance Board and administration, with input from homeless parents, youths, and advocates, in identifying, reviewing, and, if necessary, revising policies or practices that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless children and youths, including:
  - Barriers due to outstanding fees or fines or absences, or missed application or enrollment deadlines;
  - Barriers due to school discipline policies that disproportionately impact homeless students;
  - Barriers to transportation,

- Barriers due to records requirements for such items as immunizations, residency, birth certificates, school records, health records, guardianship, and other documents.
- Barriers that impede the identification of and provision of services to students including those who are also children and youths of color; those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ); English Learners; and students with disabilities, including eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- Barriers that impede a student's receipt of appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while the student attended a prior school;
- Barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, and online learning; and
- Barriers to accessing and completing post-secondary education.
- In conjunction with KTEC High School's pupil records custodian(s), ensure the privacy of student education records. In the case of homeless students, this shall include:
  - Establishing protections for records identifying the student's living situation and ensuring that information regarding living situations is not classified as "directory data" but is protected in the same manner as other non-directory records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
  - Determining whether a homeless student is a victim or survivor of domestic violence or has other safety issues that must be addressed in student records and information release procedures and ensuring that this information is properly protected from disclosure under FERPA and other applicable Federal laws.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youths, and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and provide verification of this status.